

REMARKS

Claims 12-15 are pending. By this Amendment, claim 12 is amended.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies extended to Applicants' representative during the March 18, 2010 interview. The substance of the discussion is incorporated into the amendments and remarks herein and constitute Applicants' record of the interview.

The December 24, 2009 Office Action rejects claims 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP 6-143855 to *Hikoharu*; and rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over *Hikoharu*. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Applicants' independent claim 12 is directed to a printing mask comprising a mask frame and a mesh extended on the mask frame. The printing mask includes a first resin layer that is formed inside the mesh. A thickness of the first resin layer is equivalent to a thickness of the mesh. A second resin layer is formed directly on a surface of the first resin layer. The thickness of the second resin layer is 3 micrometers or less. A pattern forming portion, in which the second resin layer is not formed, is located in a region corresponding to an electrode pattern to be formed on a printing object. A mask portion, in which the first resin layer and the second resin layer are formed, is located in a region other than the region of the pattern forming portion. A peripheral portion, in which the first resin layer is formed but the second resin layer is not formed, is located within the pattern forming portion along a periphery of the pattern forming portion.

Such features encompass Applicants' exemplary embodiment as illustrated in Fig. 14 of Applicants' as-filed specification. As shown in Fig. 14, a printing mask is formed by filling resin into openings of a mesh except in a region that forms an

electrode pattern in a pattern forming region 4. The mesh is extended on a mask frame 5. The regions of the mesh filled with the resin is called a mask portion 3. The mask portion 3 includes a filled part 3b which is a portion filled in the mesh and a raised part 3a. The raised part 3a is formed directly on a surface of the filled part 3b. The end of the filled part 3b formed inside the mesh is extended into the pattern forming portion 4 by a predetermined length from the end of the raised part 3a. Thus, the peripheral portion is located within the pattern forming portion and along a periphery of the pattern forming portion 4. Fig. 15 of Applicants' as-filed specification shows an electrode pattern formed by using the printing mask of Fig. 14.

The *Hikoharu* reference discloses a screen printing plate with a mask frame 4, an opening portion 5 and a mesh 3. A first emulsion layer 11 and a second emulsion layer 12 are formed on a layer in the screen 3. In *Hikoharu*, the first emulsion layer 11, directly above the layer in the screen, is located within the pattern forming portion. The Examiner has indicated that first emulsion layer 11 corresponds to the claimed first resin layer. According to the Examiner, the first emulsion layer is both formed in the mesh and above the mesh. Claim 1 is amended to recite that a thickness of the first resin layer is equivalent to a thickness of the mesh. This feature, in combination with the other claimed features in claim 12 is not disclosed in *Hikoharu*.

Thus, withdrawal of the rejection of independent claim 12 is respectfully requested.

The dependent claims are allowable for at least the reasons discussed above as well as the individual features they recite.

Early and favorable action with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

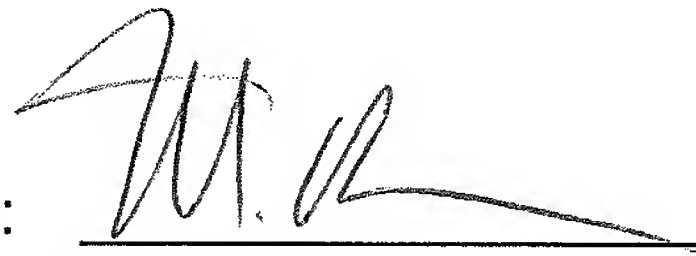
Should any questions arise in connection with this application or should the Examiner believe that a telephone conference with the undersigned would be helpful in resolving any remaining issues pertaining to this application the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

Date: April 23, 2010

By:



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